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Reports said Mengele was drug trafficker

Washington (UPI)—The CIA received reports more than a decade ago that Dr. Josef Mengele, the notorious Angel of Death at the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz, lived in Paraguay and was heavily involved in drug trafficking, documents disclosed yesterday.

Sens. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) and Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) released the documents and charged that U.S. intelligence agencies failed to follow leads that Mengele traveled freely in South America, never tried to hide his identity, and was protected by Paraguay's President General Alfredo Stroessner.

"They just didn't give a darn," D'Amato said.

Specter said at a press conference, "I am not suggesting a sinister motivation. I am suggesting negligence." Both Specter and D'Amato urged the administration to increase efforts to bring the fugitive to justice for his grotesque experiments on concentration camp victims during World War II.

In Terre Haute, Eva Kor, a victim of Mengele, said she is not at all surprised at reports that Mengele was heavily involved in drug trafficking in South America.

"Personally, I am not surprised at anything that Mengele has done. Why would we be surprised that he was trafficking in drugs when he was trafficking in human beings before? To him human beings were just a piece of meat.

"That just proves our point that he is a criminal that committed crimes against mankind and continues to do so," Kor said.

Rabbi Marvin Hier, head of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust studies, called on President Reagan to establish a "Mengele strike force" of American, West German and Israeli intelligence agencies.

"WE'VE HAD A chance to analyze the CIA documents," Hier said in Los Angeles, "and it's become clear that the only way we're going to apprehend Josef Mengele is to establish a strike force of all American intelligence agencies and coordinate them with West Germany and Israel.

"We're formally calling on the President today to order the strike force," Hier said.

However, Kathy Pherson, a CIA representative, disputed the charge and said the information was passed on to other government agencies at the time, including the State Department and the Defense Department, the Customs Service and the Treasury.

The senators obtained censored intelligence documents, including reports that Mengele underwent plastic surgery to look younger and had worked until 1968 for a West German farm machinery company that had offices in South America.

One document dated June 1972 said Mengele and others were "heavily involved in narcotics traffic."